

IN THE CLAIMS

Cancel claims 1 through 8 and add the following new claims.

9. (original) A method for picking up and handling filled, sealed, rectangular pouches where each of said pouches comprises two lateral films with a bottom side U-shaped folded bottom film between the lateral films and where the pouches stand on one of two longitudinal sides and are arranged in parallel in a row, and on a facing upper longitudinal side and are picked up with a gripper mechanism having finger-like gripper elements that are arranged in a comb-like manner, wherein the gripper elements are moved between adjacent upper longitudinal sides of adjacent pouches, in a longitudinal direction of the upper longitudinal sides, from the bottom side and pass the same.

10. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein a row of 5 to 100 pouches is simultaneously gripped.

11. (original) A method according to claim 9, wherein the gripping mechanism has a pair of gripper elements between which an upper longitudinal side of a pouch can be gripped for each pouch to be picked up at least one of which is movable or has movable elements.

12. (original) A method according to claim 11, wherein said movable element is an extendable piston enabling a longitudinal side of a pouch to be picked up in clamping manner.

13. A method according to claim 9, wherein the pouches are gripped in an orientation, where a main extension plane containing the lateral edges of the pouches is inclined to the vertical by an angle of less than 60°.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the main extension plane is substantially vertical.

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15. A method according to claim 9 wherein the particular longitudinal side on which each pouch stands has a horizontal orientation.